

PENTAGON CHECKS COMMENTS ON U-2

Officer's Remarks On Pictures Bring Inquiry

Washington, Feb. 23 (AP)—The Defense Department is inquiring into reported remarks by an Air Force officer about some details of photographs taken by United States U-2 planes of Soviet space-ship launching sites.

A department spokesman said today that the Pentagon is checking into the statements attributed to Col. Barney Oldfield, information officer for the North American Defense Command. It has asked for a transcript, if one was made, to find out "exactly what was said," the spokesman said.

But he added that the department at present has "no comment on a matter which is completely classified." This was in reference to U-2 intelligence data.

Points To Failures

Oldfield was described in news reports as having made his comments at a meeting of aviation-space writers at Fort Worth, Texas, on Wednesday night.

The dispatches reported that Oldfield said U-2 reconnaissance planes, like the one flown by Francis Gary Powers, took pictures which revealed that Russia may have had many failures along with successes in space launches.

Oldfield was reported to have said that photographs made by U-2 planes showed huge rockets

on launching pads, but that later photographs showed only scorched earth. Then he was quoted as saying:

"Must Have Exploded"

"We know that they didn't put anything into orbit from these spots. Whatever was there must have exploded on the pad."

Oldfield also was quoted as speculating on the possibility that a Russian satellite vehicle was launched in May, 1960, with a man aboard, but failed to separate from the booster rocket and may still be in orbit with the body of the man in it.

Today, Senator Jackson (D., Wash.), said the Russians "should lay bare whether or not they made any mistakes in achieving an orbital flight." He pointed out that the Russians in congratulating the United States on Lt. Col. John H. Glenn, Jr.'s success pointed out many delays and mistakes in America's space program.

"We have every reason to believe lives were lost" in Russia's attempts to put a man in orbit, Jackson said in a taped radio program.